DICKS' STANDARD PLAYS.

"MY OWN BLUE BELL,"
AND
"GRIMALKIN."

Written respectively by George Dibdin Pitt and G. H. Rodwell.

ORIGINAL COMPLETE EDITIONS.—PRICE ONE PENNY.

*** These Plays can be Performed without Risk of Infringing any Rights.

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DICKS' STANDARD PLAYS,

AND

FREE ACTING DRAMA.

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68. A Trip to Scarborough.
69. Lady Jane Grey.
70. Rob Roy.
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72. The Provoked Wife.
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75. All the World's a Stage.
76. Richard the Third.
77. A Bold Stroke for a Wife.
78. Castle of Sorrento.
79. The Inconstant.
80. Guy Mannering.
81. The Busy-Body.
82. Tom and Jerry.
83. Alexander the Great.
84. The Liar.
85. The Brothers.
86. Way of the World.
87. Cymbeline.
88. She Would & She Would Not
89. Deserted Daughter.
90. Wives as they Were, and Maids as they Are.
91. Every Man in his Humour.
92. Midsummer Night's Dream.
93. Tamerlane.
94. A Bold stroke for a Husband.
95. Julius Cæsar.
96. All for Love.
97. The Tempest.
98. Richard Cœur de Lion.
99. The Mourning Bride.
100. The Bashful Man.
101. Barbarossa.
102. The Curfew.
103. Merchant of Bruges.
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105. Timon of Athens.
106. Honest Thieves.
107. West Indian.
108. The Earl of Essex.
109. The Irish Widow.
110. The Farmer's Wife.
111. Tancred and Sigismunda.
112. The Panel.
113. The Deformed Transformed.
114. Soldier's Daughter.
115. Monsieur Tonson.
116. Edward the Black Prince.
117. School for Wives.
118. Coriolanus.
119. The Citizen.
120. The First Floor.
121. The Foundling.
122. Oroonoko.
123. Love a-la-Mode.
124. Richard the Second.
125. Siege of Belgrade.
126. Samson Agonistes.
127. The Maid of the Mill.
128. One o'Clock.
129. Who's the Dupe?
130. Mahomet, the Impostor
131. Duplicity.
132. The Devil to Pay.
133. Troilus and Cressida.
134. Ways and Means.
135. All in the Wrong.
136. Cross Purposes.
137. The Orphan; or, the Unhappy Marriage.
138. Bon Ton.
139. The Tender Husband.
140. El Hyder; or, the Chief of the Ghaut Mountains.
141. The Country Girl.
142. Midas.
143. The Castle of Andalusia.
144. Two Strings to your Bow.
145. Measure for Measure.
146. The Miser.
147. The Haunted Tower.
148. The Tailors.
149. Love for Love.
150. The Robbers of Calabria.
151. Zara.
152. High Life Below Stairs.
153. Marino Faliero.
154. The Waterman.
155. Vespers of Palermo.
156. The Farm House.
157. Comedy of Errors.
158. The Romp.
159. The Distressed Mother.
160. Atonement.
161. Three Weeks after Marriage.
162. The Suspicious Husband.
163. The Dog of Montargis.
164. The Heiress.
165. The Deserter.
166. King Henry the Eighth.
167. Comus.
168. Recruiting Sergeant.
169. Animal Magnetism.
170. The Confederacy.
171. The Carmelite.
172. The Chances.
173. Follies of a Day.
174. Titus Andronicus.
175. Paul and Virginia.
176. Know Your Own Mind.
177. The Padlock.
178. The Constant Couple.
179. Better Late than Never.
180. My Spouse and I.
181. Every One has his Fault.
182. The Deuce is in Him.
183. The Adopted Child.
184. Lovers' Vows.
185. Maid of the Oaks.
186. The Duenna.
187. The Turnpike Gate.
188. Lady of Lyons.
189. Miss in her Teens.
190. Twelfth Night.
191. Lodoiska.
192. The Earl of Warwick
193. Fortune's Frolics.

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MY OWN BLUE BELL;

OR, THE ARMY AND THE NAVY.

AN INTERLUDE, IN ONE ACT.

BY GEORGE DIBDIN PITT.

Originally Produced at the Surrey Theatre, Monday, Nov. 7, 1831.

Dramatis Personæ.

[*See page* 5.

General Sir Basil Blue, G.C.B.	Mr. Dibdin Pitt.
Sergeant Bang	Mr. Vale.
Mrs. Warde	Mrs. Vale.
Bella Blue, personating Ensign Green, of the Guards.—David Allen, a sailor boy	Miss Vincent.

Time in Representation—(With Song and Dance)—Thirty-seven Minutes.

COSTUME.

MODERN.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.—R. means *Right;* L. *Left;* D. F. *Door in Flat;* R. D. *Right Door;* L. D. *Left Door;* S. E. *Second Entrance;* U. E. *Upper Entrance;* M. D. *Middle Door;* L. U. E. *Left Upper Entrance;* R. U. E. *Right Upper Entrance;* L. S. E. *Left Second Entrance;* P. S. *Prompt Side;* O. P. *Opposite Prompt.*

RELATIVE POSITIONS.—R. means *Right;* L. *Left;* C. *Centre;* R. C. *Right of Centre;* L. C. *Left of Centre.*

R	RC	C.	LC.	L.

*** *The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage facing the Audience.*

MY OWN BLUE BELL.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in Indigo Hall.*—3 G.—*Table—chairs.—Easy chair,* R. H.

Enter MRS. WARDE, L. 1 E.

Mrs. W. Oh, dear me! to think, after so many years of quietness, we are going to have a child in the house. I never thought my master, the old General, would have consented to it. What freak has induced him to send for this girl, I can't think, unless it is to plague me? But I won't stay in the house—I'm determined.

Enter SERGEANT BANG, R. 1 E.

Bang. There you are wrong, Mother Warde; the child is one of your own sex—she is the granddaughter of your master, and even if she were not, it's your duty to show kindness to the helpless and destitute.

Mrs. W. Pack of stuff! Didn't her father fly in master's face, and go to sea, though he knew the General disliked the sea service?

Bang. There you are wrong again! He was a brave lad, fired with ambition to emulate Nelson. Master Harry didn't want to play at soldiers, so he went off to Plymouth, got taken on board as middy, fought his way up to first lieutenant, till there was no enemy on the seas, and he was put upon half pay.

Mrs. W. And very foolishly married a girl without a penny, for which his father disinherited him, and serve him right.

Bang. He married an angel! I never heard of angels being rich. She made him a good wife, but died soon, leaving this little Bella behind. The old General's heart relented, but he was too proud to confess he was in the wrong. Grief soon brought the poor lieutenant to the grave. In his last hours he wrote to his father, and bequeathed his little girl to his protection. I was with the General when the letter came—he couldn't help crying over it. "Bang," says he, "write off and tell the girl she may come if she likes." "There you're wrong," says I, "if you really wish for her to come, send your own carriage for her." He grumbled, but he did so, and I expect her here in half an hour. She is without a friend, a shilling, or a home.

Mrs. W. Poor child! Well, you are a good soul, Bang, and I'm sorry for what I said. I'll make her as comfortable as I can. How old is she?

Bang. About fourteen, and, they say, highly accomplished for her age.

Mrs. W. But the General don't like girls, and never did.

Bang. There you are wrong again. I remember the time when the General used to run after every girl he saw.

General. (*Without,* L. H.) Bang! Bang! where are you?

Bang. Here, your honour. Now, for all that he has said, I know he is impatient to have the girl. Full of contradictions, he has a good heart, and so Miss Bella will find.

Mrs. W. I think you can do what you like with him, Mr. Bang.

Bang. I never give him his way; if he's wrong, I tell him so; he'll swear, but it's sure to be all right in a little while after.

Mrs. W. Well, I'll go and make all ready for the reception of the little lady.

Bang. That's right. Now you look like yourself, again—you'll be Mrs. Bang before you die yet!

Mrs. W. If I wait for that, Sergeant, I think I shall wait some time. [*Exit Mrs. Warde,* L. 1 E.

Bang. Umph! she says right. I'm not fond of matrimony—it only brings expense and children. No, no, I'm fond of the petticoats, but I'll never be clogged with a wife, like my old friend Hector. Yes, he bore it like a soldier, and tamed her at last.

General. (*Without,* L. H.) Bang! come here, you dog, and help me!

The GENERAL *enters,* L. 1 E., *met by Bang, who leads him to easy chair,* R. C.

Gen. Any arrival yet, Bang? I'm almost sorry I sent for her.

Bang. There you are wrong.

Gen. Why, stupid?

Bang. Because she's your relation, and while you feed so many poor creatures, why should you neglect your own flesh and blood?

Gen. But she is a daughter of the navy.

Bang. And the navy is an honour to the nation.

Gen. I hate it!

Bang. They share our glory; they also hope, like us, to encounter peril, and greater ones than ours. I love a blue jacket; I was once saved from being drowned by one, and I'll share my rations with a sailor at any time.

Gen. That's right; but Harry should not have gone to sea—I could have made him a colonel by this time. Promotion in the navy is slow, and Nelson knocked it up altogether.

Bang. He was a hero whose memory must live for ever. But let's change the subject;—how do you mean to receive Bella?

Gen. I won't see her. Mrs. Warde will have the care of her, and she must never come near me.

Bang. There you are wrong again, General.

Gen. What for, fool!

Bang. You need something to amuse your mind; she would entertain you, read to you, dance to you, sing——

Gen. A parcel of sea-songs! She shan't come near me. (*Knock heard,* L. H.

Bang. There she is—I heard the carriage wheels—I'll bring her in.

Gen. And I shall turn my back.

Bang. There you are wrong again. A brother officer should never turn his back on another brother officer, whether in the foot, horse, sea service, or horse marines. [*Exit Bang,* L. 1 E.

Gen. So they want to force this foundling on me, I see. It's a conspiracy—but as I begin, so will I go on. No doubt this girl is trained up in deceit and artifice. I remember she was a daughter of the navy, too. Pshaw! it was the navy that seduced my son from his duty, and I hate 'em!

Enter BELLA BLUE, *with* BANG *and* MRS. WARDE, L. 1 E.

Mrs. W. Here she comes, General, and as sweet a little creature as ever you set your eyes on.

Bella. (*Kneeling to General.*) My dear—dear grandfather!

Gen. I am not your dear grandfather. You have been taught this.

Bella. True, sir: I have ever been taught to love you with sincere affection—my father and my mother both told me to do so—and I know that they both loved you from their hearts.

Bang. Bless *her* little heart!

Gen. Why do you kneel there?—though I suppose you have made up your mind to do as you like—I shall not raise you.

Bang. There, you are wrong again; keeping a lady on her knees ar'n't gentlemanly—she's better *on your knees.*

(*Puts her on the General's knees.*)

Gen. What are you about, Bang? How was it that your father and mother never wrote to me?

Bella. They did, but in time of war letters often miscarry—I wrote myself.

Gen. Then you can write?

Mrs. W. That I'll be bound—and sing too.

Bella. I'll show you, grandfather.

(*** *If there is a piano on the stage, the child can play, if not she sings the song of "My own Blue Bell."*)

Bang. What do you think of that, General?

Gen. Bah! I'd get a parrot to do the same. Well, child, you may stay here, you shall have all you want—and had you been the child of a soldier, I don't know what I might not have done; but you are a daughter of the navy, and so—space be between us.

[*Exit General,* R. 1 E.

Bella. Cruel prejudice! What can have been the cause?

Bang. I'll tell you, miss. When the General was only an ensign, he fell in love with a young lady, who, preferring a sea captain, ran away with him, and you are a daughter of one of the same service, but you ar'n't any the worse for that, miss.

Bella. The worse—no, that I'm not—I love the navy—I look upon every sailor as a friend—every cabin-boy as a brother. True blue is my motto, and long may the banner of England float triumphant on her wooden walls.

Bang. Bravo! A girl after my own heart.

Bella. Ar'n't you Daddy Bang, as dear father used to call you?

Bang. Yes, my love, I'm old Daddy Bang, the corporal—your grandfather and I have seen many a battle together.

Bella. And you are Mrs. Warde, my dear father's kind nurse?

Mrs. W. Yes, and one that will ever be a friend to you, my child.

Bella. Now, then, let me enlist you both into my confidence. I have formed a plan for curing the General of his dislike to girls and the navy. Will you assist me?

Bang. With all my heart!

Mrs. W. And all mine—but how?

Bella. Leave that to me. I have prepared dresses, and I think that I can vary as many times as Proteus. You must come with me, Mrs. Warde, and help me. You, Sergeant Bang, will introduce me in each character to the General, and he shall soon confess that though I'm but a girl, I'm a better general than him. Hey, presto! my heart bounds, and hope, even now, promises success. [*Exit, with Mrs. Warde,* L. 1 E.

Bang. Well, I knew I should like her, but she has completely made me her captive. I must work the old General up, for he'll never confess himself to be dead beat till he can't help it—he's as obstinate as a mule. Was once fairly beaten in the field—wouldn't own it—and beat the enemy at last. So now it's something like kicking against a brick wall—but there, it's no use talking, I think this wench will make her story good. She's a true blue, and the blue flag and white flag combined would conquer the whole world.

Re-enter GENERAL, R. 1 E., *Bang assists him to chair.*

Gen. Bang! I've been thinking I'll send this girl off to boarding-school.

Bang. There you are wrong. She knows enough now, and in my opinion, when young ladies are kept too long at boarding-school, they learn more tricks than tactics—all about cheating lovers and such like, don't they?

Gen. It's the failing of the sex—all are coquets. I fix'd my heart upon one—she ran away with a sailor, and broke my heart.

Bang. She only gave it a scratch—you recovered, and married another.

Gen. I did—made a fool of myself—married the daughter of a lord, who thought more of the duties of the toilette than those of a wife and mother. She died in giving birth to a son.

Bang. And left you a happy bachelor again.

Gen. It's a lie—I've never been happy since. My son grew up, turned sailor, and broke my heart again.

Bang. There you are wrong again—you are heart-whole now.

Gen. Why, you shrimp, how dare you call me whole? arn't I riddled through with balls, and haven't I got the gout from laying in bivouac in the tented field?

Bang. And yet you would have exposed your son to the same fate! He was a brave lad, he served, and died an honour to his country. What did you want more?

Gen. He should have been a soldier! Then he offended me again. Why didn't he get a boy instead of a girl? I might have made a soldier of him.

Bang. There you are wrong again.

Gen. Curse your infernal impudence, you make me out always wrong.

Bang. I say that you are only wrong at times, and that is very often. If there were no girls, we should have no women, and if there were no women, what poor devils we should all be.

Gen. Can't see it. On the march I could always wash my own shirt and broil my own steak.

Bang. Could you *make* your shirt? Did you love your mother? You regret your wife—you know you have been a wild chap—as ever wore a red coat. Women are the sweeteners of life—you know it!

Gen. Bang, I'll discharge you!

Bang. You say a thing that you don't mean. Suppose you did discharge me as your valet, I've got my pension. Now take your grand-daughter to attend you—you'd be doing right then—I'd give up; but as long as I am with you, I'll speak my mind.

Gen. Did I make a sergeant of you, and then give

you a hundred a year, with quarters and rations, to tell me this?

Bang. Yes, and you get a friend cheap. I tell you that you were always too obstinate. In America, you marched us into a wood where the enemy were in ambuscade—you set fire to the wood, forgetting that you would burn your men along with the enemy; and it would have been so, if I hadn't told you to your head you was a fool, and must turn back—that saved all our lives.

Gen. Well, well, any man may be mistaken at times. I am so—sometimes, but very *seldom.*

Bang. It's very often.

Gen. If you contradict me again to-day, I'll blow out your brains! (*Knock heard,* L. H.) Who's that?

Bang. I'll see.

[*Goes off,* L. 1 E., *as if to door.*

Enter BELLA *(as Ensign Green of the guards).* BANG *follows, looking surprised.*

Bella. Is the nobby old governor within? Tell him that his nephew, Charles James Henry William Green, Ensign in the Guards, has called to pay his *devoirs.*

Bang. General, here's a greenhorn here wants to devour you, he says.

Bella. Oh! Are you the old fellow that's my uncle?

Gen. Old fellow, sir? I am General Sir Basil Blue, G.C.B. I had some relations of the name of Green; but as Blues and Greens don't assimilate, I know nothing of them, nor do I wish to know.

Bella. That's bearish! You are a fine looking old Grecian—you put me in mind of the song of "The Old Commodore." (*Sings.*)

The bullets and the gout,
Have so knocked his hull about,
That he'll never more be fit for sea.

Gen. Damn the sea! I am a soldier! What do you call yourself?

Bang. A shrimp, if I am to judge by colour and size.

Bella. I am an Ensign. (*Sings.*)

And fought in famous battles,
When the Peers of Europe
By the bold Godfredo led,
Displayed the cross and won the Holy land.

Bang. I never heard of that General in all my life.

Bella. I'll take a cigar! (*Lights one.*)

Gen. Another disgrace to the age! Youths are seen with cigars in their mouths, and without sense in their brains—both end alike in smoke. Have you seen any service? What company do you belong to?

Bella. First Grenadiers!

Bang. Oh, lord! there's a chap for a *Grenadier,* that's only just left his *dear granny.*

Bella. I've seen service in India.

Bang. Thumper the second!

Bella. Against the Sikhs—indeed, I was the person that put an end to the war. I commanded the 4th What-d'ye-call-'ems, at the battle of Shilling something——

Gen. Chillianwallah?

Bella. That's it. The enemy came on in great force—our dragoons were completely brought to a stand—"Never mind, my brave fellows," says I, "just keep behind me; I'll talk to the enemy"—who didn't understand a word of our language.

Gen. What the devil was the use of your talking to them, then?

Bella. I challenged the four great generals to single combat—they couldn't use the sword like me, I knew that—I cut 'em up like pork! On came the main body. "Now, dragoons," says I, "go your hardest." In fifteen minutes we had covered seventy miles of ground, killed 18,000 men, took 19,000 cannon, and half a million prisoners. I got twenty-seven wounds, but when I came home they wouldn't believe what I had done.

Gen. Very likely—myself for one!

Bella. They only gave me a pair of colours; so, as you have a great deal of influence, and know me, as your relation, to be a devilish clever fellow, I want you to make me a colonel at once.

Gen. Umph! you may be a Green, but you will not see anything green about me. It's my belief that you are a juvenile Munchausen. If you *are* in the Guards, it must be as a triangle boy.

Bella. I was to have been made a dragoon; but they said I was too handsome for anything. The women petitioned Government to remove the regiment from Brighton, I was such a lady-killer! As I am the only one of your family, besides yourself, that's an officer, of course you will leave me all your money. Don't keep me long, as I want to purchase a company. [*Exit Bella,* L. 1 E.

Bang. That's a pretty chick! If that Green has ever *been* in a field of battle, it's my belief he'd turn out a *scarlet runner.*

Gen. He's a puppy! I had a relative of the name, but he died, I understood; at all events, this fellow shall never inherit a penny of my fortune. Even this girl is better than a boastful story-teller.

Bang. One chalk for the little wench, however! I never heard of this nephew before, General. I remember there was a talk in the regiment of you and a certain sergeant's widow——

Gen. Bah! I don't remember it.

Bang. Of course not. I never knew a man remember anything to his disadvantage.

Gen. That girl shall go away to-morrow.

Bang. Then I'll go the next day.

Gen. Why?

Bang. If you begin to be unjust, wholesale, there will be no dealing with you at all; so, the best thing is to take my discharge at once.

Gen. Well, I begin to think that she is. But she's a girl, and a child of the navy—I can't forget that.

Bang. Well, but you don't mean to say that you wouldn't do anything for a sailor?

Gen. Not if I know it.

Bang. There you are wrong again! A man of true philanthropy knows no difference of persons. But what charity can be expected from a man who objects to his own son because he's a sailor, and his grand-daughter because she's a girl.

Gen. Haven't I a right to do as I please with my own money? I have, and I will.

Bang. There you are wrong again! You didn't bring the money into the world with you, nor you can't take it out again. It has only been lent to you by Providence, and you have a right to do as you would be done by.

Enter BELLA, *disguised as David Allen, a Sailor Boy,* L. 1 E.

Bella. If you please, sir, is General Sir Basil Blue here? I come to solicit his charity for a poor little shipwrecked sailor boy.

Bang. Ah, my poor boy, you have come to the wrong port, I fear.

Gen. Come here! What's your name?

Bella. David Allen. Mother was a first cousin of yours—father was lost at sea.

Gen. Served him right for ever going there.

Bella. To help poor mother, I was forced to go to sea when only nine years old. "A sea boy on the high and giddy mast," I've endured many hardships—have been wrecked, lost all, and am now begging my way back to my native village.

Bang. Poor lad! Here's a deserving object, General, though he ain't a soldier.

Gen. Who sent you to me?

Bella. The parish officers would have done it, but I said, "No! if my relation hasn't the heart to assist me in a little way, voluntarily, I'm too proud to wish to compel him."

Bang. Drat me! but the sailor boy beats all the rest hollow, except the little girl.

Bella. Miss Bella sent me to you now, sir; she gave me all she had, and told me to come to you for something better, for she says, "My dear grandfather, though he has got funny ways with him, has an excellent heart, and the tear of humanity that dims his eye will prevent him seeing the jacket he pretends to dislike, but which, in his own heart, he honours and respects."

Bang. Strike me, General, but she has got the length of your foot to an inch.

Gen. She's an impudent minx! But give the boy a shilling, and send him away.

Bang. A guinea, did you say?

Gen. Well, a guinea, if you will have it so!

Bang. I can't—it's not enough.

Gen. What the deuce would you have me do?

Bang. Give him five guineas, and tell him to cut and come again.

Gen. Do as you like—I'll make the girl pay for it.

Bang. There you are wrong again; the girl has shown you your duty, and you ought to give her a fortune for it. Here, my lad, put that in your locker, and don't forget to call again.

(*Gives money.*)

Bella. Thanks to you and to the General too. He shall not say that I'm good for nothing—I'll dance you a college hornpipe.

[*Dance and exit,* L. 1 E.

Gen. You are making a pretty fool of me, giving away my money at that rate!

Bang. Why don't you give it yourself, then? You may as well do it, as wish to do so.

Gen. That girl gets too bold already; she shall be sent away.

Bang. That I may have a journey to bring her back again. If ever you send her away, you'll be sorry for it afterwards.

Enter MRS. WARDE, L. 1 E.

Mrs. W. Well, General, as your grand-daughter thought you seemed to look upon her as a burthen, she has taken herself off.

Gen. Without my consent? I'll cut her off with a shilling!

Bang. There you are wrong again!

Mrs. W. She was ordered out of the house.

Gen. Who ordered her?

Mrs. W. Your niece, Miss Narcissa Dandelion, whom you sent for some time ago—a fine lady, and such an upstart and scold! Dear me, she orders everything about the house as she pleases. I won't stay if she stays.

Bang. And the poor, dear, quiet, good little feeling girl is turned out for the sake of a termagant!

Gen. This it is to have relations! Certainly I did send for Narcissa, but she had no authority to turn my own child out.

Mrs. W. But she did—she said she was a beggar, and only fit for the workhouse. You didn't send to stop it, and the poor girl went off in a shower of rain.

Bang. And if I had my will, I'd send the other away in a whirlwind!

Gen. Who is master of this house?

Bang. You, when you are in your senses, but that ain't very often.

Gen. Rascal! go, run after the girl.

Mrs. W. Dear me, sir, she's a mile off by this time.

Bang. Well, General, I think you are in a fix.

Mrs. W. I'll just go and fasten the door.

[*Exit Mrs. Warde,* L. 1 E.

Gen. How dare anybody turn her out of my house! Now that she's gone, I feel that I do love her, and would give half my money to recover her.

Bang. Your own grand-daughter, too—your son's child! It was all your own fault.

Gen. It's a lie! but you have been all to blame, and if she don't return this night, I'll turn you all out, neck and crop!

Enter BELLA, *as herself, and* MRS. WARDE L. 1 E.

Bella. No, dear sir, pray don't say that, for my sake!

Gen. Come to my arms, my dear girl; I am glad to see you back. I shall now forget all my foolish prejudices about the sea—and yet, my good-for-nothing nephew, Ensign Green of the Guards, I'll cashier him at once.

Bella. Pray don't, for that was me.

Bang. I'll take my oath of it!

Gen. I'm astonished! But that poor little sailor fellow that you sent to me——

Bella. To test the real feelings of your heart, and was also myself,

Mrs. W. That I can answer for, as I dressed her myself.

Gen. Thank heaven, I have a grand-daughter that I may well be proud of. You shall be my heiress, and that Miss Narcissa may find a fortune where she can.

Bella. As she has been dead some time, killed in a steeplechase, we must forget her failings.

Bang. All this licks me, complete.

Gen. Bang and nurse, then, have both been in the secret all the time?

Bella. They have; but you will forgive them, for my sake?

Gen. Forgive them!—that I will, and reward them also, for beating a foolish prejudice out of me, and convincing me of the sterling merit of my child.

Bella. Who has now only to ask for the kind approbation of her good patrons here; but, young in tact, allow me to strive to do my best, and let not my tongue—but my future deeds speak for me.

Gen. And let me come forward, to thank you in her name; and in so doing Bang, here, will not say, "I do wrong again," when I solicit your patronage for——

CURTAIN.

GRIMALKIN;

OR, A WOMAN CHANGED INTO A CAT.

A METAMORPHOSIOLOGICAL SKETCH, IN ONE ACT.

BY G. H. RODWELL.

First Performed at the Adelphi Theatre, November 19, 1827.

Dramatis Personæ.

[*See page* 7.

ERNEST (a young man disgusted with the world)	Mr. Hemmings.
NICHOLAS (an old servant, disguised as an old Indian juggler)...	Mr. Wilkinson.
MINETTA (cousin of and in love with Ernest)	Miss Ellen Daly
MARIANNE (old Governante of Ernest)	Mrs. Daly.

TIME IN REPRESENTATION.—Forty Minutes.

COSTUME.

ERNEST.—Gray frock trimmed with black velvet, black trunk breeches, gray stockings, high shoes
NICHOLAS.—Black long gaberdine, shawl round waist, high black Hindoo hat.
MINETTA.—Plain white dress.
MARIANNE.—Coloured gown, German cap, long earrings.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.—R. means *Right;* L. *Left;* D. F. *Door in Flat;* R. D. *Right Door;* L. D. *Left Door;* S. E. *Second Entrance;* U. E. *Upper Entrance;* M. D. *Middle Door;* L. U. E. *Left Upper Entrance;* R. U. E. *Right Upper Entrance;* L. S. E. *Left Second Entrance;* P. S. *Prompt Side;* O. P. *Opposite Prompt.*

RELATIVE POSITIONS.—R. means *Right;* L. *Left;* C. *Centre;* R. C. *Right of Centre* L. C. *Left of Centre.*

R. RC. C. LC.

*** *The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.*

GRIMALKIN.

SCENE I.—*Ernest's Bedchamber—an attic. The bed is an alcove with a casement immediately over it—the curtains of the bed are partly drawn, so as to hide a portion of the window, and through the window is seen the roofs of the houses.—A table, chair, a birdcage, and two practicable doors.—Books open on desks, &c., small trunk on table.*

MARIANNE *discovered asleep in a chair, with Grimalkin in her lap, also asleep.*

OPENING PIECE.

(*Sometimes omitted.*)

Nicholas. (*Tapping at the door without.*) Hist, there! Within, there! Open the door!

(*Marianne snores.*)

Zounds! she's asleep—I hear her snore—
Marianne, Marianne, open the door.

Mar. (*Waking and gaping.*) Who—o knocks?—who's there?

Nic. 'Tis I—'tis I—
Come, open the door, or to break it I'll try.

Mar. Who's I, pray?—who's I?—this is some scurvy trick—
Who is it?

Nic. Why, your old friend, old Nicholas!

Nic. and *Mar.* So pray, Dame Marianne, pull the string,
And let your old friend, old Nicholas, in.
Old Nich—with safety then I'll pull the string,
So come, my old friend—old Nich, walk in!

(*A tapping at the door.*)

Nicholas. (*Without.*) Marianne! Marianne!

Mar. (*Waking and gaping.*) Ha—aw! Bless me—why, I've been asleep, surely! (*Tapping again.*) Oh, dear: there's somebody at the door, and I must not wake poor Grimalkin—oh, I'll pull the string.

(*Pulls the string—the door opens, and enter* NICHOLAS.)

Nic. Why, Marianne, you were asleep.

Mar. Asleep? Oh, no, no—only dozing—h—aw! (*Gaping.*)

Nic. Do—o—o—o—on't ga—a—pe so—(*Gaping*)—don't you know 'tis catch—atch—atching? (*Gaping.*) Why, the cat will jump down your thro—o—at!

Mar. Hush! Grimalkin is asleep, and we mustn't wake her.

Nic. Grimalkin! Why, Marianne, you treat the cat as though she were your mistress. Not the first mistress, by the bye, that has been a cat! Is she as much a favourite of Mr. Ernest's as ever?

Mar. Yes, yes. I do believe Grimalkin is the only thing he loves in the world—you'd think him an old maid instead of a young man——

Nic. Bless me! what an odd taste—while there's his young cousin Minetta—my mistress—would bestow herself and her fortune on him immediately. I wish we could bring them together.

Mar. So I tell him; but he won't hear of it. He hates the sight of his fellow-creatures, and will not even see her! He says Grimalkin is the only living thing in the world that has been faithful to him, and who has not cheated him and deserted him in his fallen fortunes!

Nic. Poor pussy! She is certainly a fine cat, though.

SONG.—NICHOLAS.

AIR.—*Love was once a Little Boy.*

Æsop tells us of a cat—
Mew, mew, mew!
The terror of each mouse and rat—
Mew, mew, mew!
To catch and eat canary bird,
This animal I've always heard
Was fine a cat as ever purr'd—
Mew, mew, mew!

Whene'er her master saw this cat—
Mew, mew, mew!
His heart it pat so—pit-a-pat—
Mew, mew, mew!
He all the village maidens spurn'd,
Strange fires in his bosom burn'd:
He wish'd this cat to woman turn'd—
Mew, mew, mew!

His wish was granted, and the cat—
Mew, mew, mew!
At his own piano sat—
Mew, mew, mew!
"Sweet girl," he cried; she answered, "Sir!"
He ask'd her hand—the cat said "Purr!"
So at once he married her—
Mew, mew, mew!

At night the neighbouring roofs around—
Mew, mew, mew!
Titters with many a gutteral sound—
Mew, mew, mew!
Some favour'd Tom, with cunning wiles,
With well-known cries her ear beguiles,
Away she scampers o'er the tiles—
Mew, mew, mew!

He on each roof and flat did crawl—
Mew, mew, mew!
Himself the greatest flat of all—
Mew, mew, mew!
Soon wet through, his dressing-gown
Trips him up—he tumbles down,
And on the pavement cracks his crown—
Mew, mew, mew!

MORAL.

From this fable do not spurn—
You, you, you!
This lesson, gentlemen, to learn—
You, you, you!
That when your hearts go pit-a-pat,
And you scarce know what you'd be at,
For a wife don't choose a cat—
Mew, mew, mew!

Mar. I'll put her carefully on the bed; she'll sleep peaceable there. (*Puts the cat on the bed.*) Ha! when he was rich he had enough friends, and now——

Nic. He is poor—he has none,—well, that's quite natural—quite the way of the world! Riches take wings and fly away, and friends fly away at the same time—and the devil fly away with such friends, say I——

Mar. Yes; and here we are, in such a state that I really believe that I must sell poor Grimalkin to the cook at next door to provide my master a breakfast!

Nic. Poor Grimalkin! I don't think Mr. Ernest will like to breakfast off his cat, though.

Mar. Bless ye! I don't say a word about it, but what is one to do? There is not a bit nor a sup in the house, and he does nothing but pore over his books!

Nic. Well, according to your account he has got nothing else to *pour* over.

Mar. Oh, dear! he reads them till he's turned quite mad!

Nic. Turned mad! I wish, with so many books, he'd turn over a new leaf——

Mar. Then he questions me as to who I was before I was Marianne, and whether I can recollect being any other body, and I don't know what all—and talks about Thagoras and Braham, and Fill and Sophy.

Nic. Fill and Sophy!—*fillosophy*, you mean, you poor ignorant individual! Ah! I thought as much. Young mistress said too much wisdom had made him foolish—so, Marianne, it's a good job you and I are not over wise. We are not wise enough to be foolish, are we?

Mar. Why, I don't know what you may be—I ain't, I know. Well, and then sometimes he will talk to Grimalkin in the same way, and swear that the soul of some faithful creature must have taken refuge in her body.

Nic. A soul in a cat's skin, he, he, he!

Mar. And then he writes poetry upon her fidelity.

Nic. Writes poetry to his cat! Well, I've heard writing poetry called courting the mews——

Mar. He'll never court anything, unless he could turn Grimalkin into a woman. He swears all the rest of her sex are jilts. But I'm sure I wish he would not read so much in them books. I say, Nicholas, what is this philosophy as turns him mad?

Nic. Why, philosophy is—you see, Marianne—that philosophy is—— Why, what an ignoramus you must be not to know what philosophy is!

Mar. Well, then, what is it?

Nic. Why, philosophy is—is what you see; why, what makes a philosopher, to be sure!

Mar. Well, and what is that?

Nic. A philosopher is one who understands philosophy. Now, that I think is plain; but, I say, Marianne, I'll look out the word in this big dictionary. Lord, lord—no wonder learned men are always at words together—when there are so many of them. Let us see, it begins with F. Fill,—why there's no such word!

Mar. Oh, but look in this book; this is the one that gave master his madness.

Nic. Is it? Then that's just what my mistress told me to learn, and she said if she once knew that she would find out a remedy. (*Reads.*) Phi—phi——

Mar. Fie, indeed!

Nic. (*Reading.*) L-o-s—los!

Mar. Loss! Aye, my poor master lost his senses.

Nic. O-p-h-y—ophy!

Mar. Oh fie! Aye, so I say to him all day, oh fie—and for shame!

Nic. Pooh, pooh; hold your ignorant tongue while I put phi and ophy together. 'Egad, I've got it; why, Marianne, that's philosophy. Let's see—yes, philosophy of—of (*spelling*) p-y, py!

Mar. Fillosophy of a pie.

Nic. (*Spelling.*) Py-py-tha-go-ras, py-tha-go-ras.

Man. That's it, phagoras—that's it!

Nic. (*Reads.*) "He and his followers believe that after death men's souls passed into other bodies, according to the manner of life they had led." Lord bless me! (*Reads.*) "If they had been vicious, they were imprisoned in the bodies of miserable beasts." There, Marianne, hear that, and alter your way of life. (*Reads.*) "But if they lived virtuously, some happier brute might be their lot." There, Marianne, live virtuously, and a brute may be your happy lot. "All the inhabitants of India and China still follow, and believe in these tenets." Lord! Lord! what pumps they must be! "*Vide* Brama." Brama! Well, he's a good one to unlock a secret, to be sure! And does Mr. Ernest believe all this?

Mar. Ay, as sure as eggs is eggs. He calls it the *transmogrification* of souls. Whenever I scold, he says that one Xantippe possesses me; and t'other day, when I told him I was an old maid, he said I had the soul of the chaste Lucretia.

Nic. Chased Lucretia! Why, who does he suppose ever chased you? Why, with such a belief, no one could say his soul is his own. However, all this must go to my young mistress—she'll make something of it. (*Tapping at door*)

Mar. Oh, dear, dear! There's my master. Pray get ye gone! He'll never forgive me if he finds a man with me.

Nic. Why, what harm could there be?

Mar. Oh, there's no knowing! Hide here—hide here; and slip out when his back is turned.

(*Puts him in closet, and opens door to* ERNEST, *who enters.*)

Ern. Why, Marianne, by the time you kept me at the door, I feared you too had deserted me.

Mar. I! Heaven forbid! No, no. I was afraid of waking poor Grimalkin. See how soundly she sleeps.

Ern. (*Gazing at cat.*) Poor puss! She does indeed sleep soundly—and to sleep is happiness. The hungry dream they are fed; the poor dream they are rich. The lawyer dreams that he has a client; and the client that he has gained his suit. The lover dreams he is married, and is happy; and the

husband dreams he is a widower, and is happier. And there is at least one negative happiness always attendant on sleep.

Mar. What is that, sir?

Ern. Why, that one no longer sees one's fellow creatures. But, oh, Marianne, I had a dream last night that delighted me.

Mar. A dream! Bless me! Tell it, sir.

Ern. I dreamed that I sate here in my misanthropy—breathing malediction on the faithlessness of humanity; that you snored in your armchair; and that poor Grimalkin purred by my side. I was praising her fidelity, and considering how superior she was to my fellow creatures, when suddenly her form seemed to enlarge—every limb dilated—her face humanized—her whiskers became golden tresses—her paws became arms and legs—and instead of Grimalkin a beautiful woman stood before me——

Mar. Lord bless me——

Nic. (*Listens, aside.*) How mad he is!

Ern. Ernest, said she——

Mar. What! the cat?

Ern. Behold, through the divine power of Brama, your wishes are accomplished. Behold, my soul has resumed its former habitation, and I will be as faithful to ye as a wife, and have power as a cat—— At that moment, ravished with delight, I seized her hand, when a sudden scream of poor Grimalkin, and a deep scratch from her claw, awoke me to the sad reality that she was still—a cat.

Nic. Bless me! poor man!

Ern. (*Approaches the bed.*) And why should not this dream be realized? why should the ancient philosophers be more mistaken than the moderns? All India and China—more than half the globe, believe in the doctrine of Brama. Why should they not be right as well as we? Oh, Brama, how shall I appeal to thee.

Nic. (*Aside.*) Brama! this will at any rate inform my mistress, and we must invent some scheme to give him his senses again. Poor man!

[*Exit.*

Mar. And have ye obtained nothing from your late father's creditors?

Ern. Yes, long faces and short excuses. Some promised to pay next month, some next year, and some to-morrow, but none keep their word. They all swear they are in poverty. One declared he had not a farthing in the world, and called to his groom for his saddle horses; another protested he was ruined, and kissed his hand from his cabriolet; while a third proclaimed himself insolvent as he stepped into his elegant carriage.

Mar. Oh, the villains! and you have travelled thus far for nothing?

Ern. No, no—not for nothing! We have studied human nature. Do you remember the pretty women at the theatre, how they danced away?

Mar. Yes, yes! and how your money danced away too, and how they danced away when it was gone.

Ern. Aye, that gave me my knowledge of women. I came here to recover the just debts due to my father from those who had been pampered at his table in his prosperity, and they have shut their doors in my face. That has given me a knowledge of man——

Mar. Why had you not written to your uncle while he was yet alive?

Ern. My uncle! Have I not forbidden you to mention him? Did he not ruin and deceive my father? Did he not falsify his accounts? But he is dead—his soul has passed into the body of some fox, to be hunted down as he hunted down others, in spite of his cunning.

Mar. But, then, your young cousin, whom you have not seen since she was a child, and who they say is so pretty and so wise—so cunning and so good—she would fain repair the wrong her father did you. She proposes to marry you, and you will not even see her, though she lives within three doors of us.

Ern. Why should I? What should I do with a wife?

Mar. Why, do as other men do, to be sure. Bless ye, sir, a wife would soon set you to rights; she'd regulate all your affairs—bring you back to your proper senses——

Ern. Drive me out of them, rather.

Mar. And give you a fireside——

Ern. That would make the house too hot to hold me.

Mar. Her agreeable prattle would be like——

Ern. A pewterer's shop, or the clack of a mill.

Mar. And, with such a companion, there'd soon be an end to all your philosophy——

Ern. There would, indeed!

Mar. And that, I am sure, would be a good thing.

Ern. Marianne, there are but two females in the world whom I am inclined to love—you are one of them—(*taking her hand*)—but you wouldn't have me marry you?

Mar. Lord, Mr. Ernest, you're in jest—I'm too old.

Ern. And poor Grimalkin is the other. (*With absence.*) She is certainly a younger cat than you are——

Mar. Cat, indeed!

Ern. But, in her present shape, I don't think I can marry her—and so, Marianne, what have you got for breakfast?

Mar. Nothing, sir; I spent the last coin for Grimalkin's supper.

Ern. Well, well, leave me to my books. Food for the mind will make the body cease to remember its wants. In the deep researches of philosophy I shall forget that I have had no breakfast, and Pythagoras and Plato shall prevent my regret at the absence of the anticipation of a dinner. Yes, philosophy shall be my only food. (*Reads.*)

Mar. Ay, 'tis that makes ye so pale and thin. (*Aside.*) I'll go and complete my bargain for poor Grimalkin—for we must eat.

[*Exit.*

Ern. Divine Brama—enviable Bramins! who believe in and witness this transmigration of souls. I, too, believe in it—and why should it not be true?—why should not the cruel murderer be possessed with the souls of Caligula or Nero?—why should not the modern patriot be animated by the spirits of Brutus or the Gracchi, and the great robbers of the age by that of the universal Cæsar?—Seizer! a good name for a robber, by the bye!—and why should not my poor cat, whose fidelity has been unshaken by my misfortunes, be imbued with the spirit of the devoted Eloisa, or that of the faithful Laura! (*Approaching the bed and raising the curtain.*) Poor Grimalkin! how sweetly she sleeps! I could gaze upon her till I thought my dream realized! My brain turns round! Oh, that I were in India, and that some

kind Bramin would endue me with the power he possesses to call the soul into the form of the last tenement it inhabited!

Enter NICHOLAS, *decked as an Indian.*

Nic. (*Aside.*) Still looking at his cat. My mistress has taught me my lesson, and he seems quite ready to receive me. He! he! hem! My lord!

(*Ernest starts.*)

Ern. Who the devil can this be? What a droll figure!

Nic. Is it to Ernest Walden that I address myself?

Ern. The same; but this unannounced intrusion from a stranger——

Nic. No such stranger as ye think for. You see I am a foreigner come from distant land. I am an Indian. My father was a native of Tryconopolist, and my mother an honourable laundress of Bander Malantra. I first saw the light on the borders of, and first bathed my infant limbs in, the beantifnl River Taungwa Kiaunga, whose waters supplied my mother in her trade of the pnrification of linen for the inhabitants of Tong Loo.

Ern. Well—but, sir, what are Tryconopolist, Bander Malantra, and Tong Loo to me?

Nic. Hear me, most impatient of listeners! Your father, on the settlement of the Tong Wong tea-takery Sonchong Hysons of England, as we call your East India Company in our vocabulario, was the friend of mine.

Ern. An what was your Tryconopolist father?

Nic. A bonze—a bonze! a priest of Brama! I was his attendant in the Temple of Tongarewong, and daily washed the face of the divine Jos Vishnu when he gave audience to his worshippers.

Ern. Valet de chambre to the divine Vishnu?

Nic. Yes, most mighty, my son of England. But the desire to see foreign parts drove me to quit the border of Taungwa Kiaunga. I came to England, I came to London—magnificent country! happy metropolis!—where I should have starved if I had not recollected some of my Indian tricks.

Ern. Aye, and where many others save themselves from starving—by their tricks—and pray Mr. Tong-wong-fong-fa what were your tricks?

Nic. I—sir, was, and am, the famous Indian juggler.

Ern. And lived by juggling—why there is nothing uncommon in that—all the world's a juggle. 'Tis the whole business of human creatures to juggle each other:—governments juggle their subjects, and subjects juggle their governors—lawyers juggle their clients, and clients juggle themselves—physicians juggle their patients, and Death juggles both of them—hnsbands juggle their wives, and wives their husbands—friend juggles friend—and all the world is an unceasing circle of juggling, till the devil juggles all. Yours is no uncommon trade.

Nic. Then I taught astronomy and dancing.

Ern. Comets and quadrilles—stars and garters!

Nic. Gave lessons in politics and Pope Joan, lectured on paying the national debt, and invented a save-all for the preservation of rushlights, projected a new system of police by which one pick-pocket detected another, and devoted my leisure moments to my favourite study, the great Brama, and the transmigration of souls.

Ern. Brama, the transmigration of souls—go on, my dear Tong-wong-fong-fa.

Nic. 'Tis one of the articles of our belief, the me-me—(*Aside.*) That word's too hard for me.

Ern. Metempsychosis—I know it is.

Nic. Yes, according to the curs we lives here, we shall have the honour to be bears or buffaloes—pigeons or partridges—magpies or monkies hereafter. A man of your sense must see the sense of this, and believe it in every sense.

Ern. Believe in it—to be sure I do.

Nic. Now I, though you would scarcely believe it, I was originally an old maid.

Ern. An old maid!

Nic. Yes, but being given to talking, my soul passed into a magpie.

Ern. A magpie!

Nic. Yes. From a magpie, my soul flew into a dandy when dying of love. I found myself warmly nestled under the wing of a turtle dove, which being killed and eaten by my mother, she was brought to bed of me, and was quite as well as could be expected. Now you—you were originally a sheep.

Ern. A sheep! very likely. Then my bashfulness is accounted for, and my love of mutton is only an innocent species of egotism——

Nic. Your skin being dressed for parchment, and your heart eaten by a lawyer's clerk of the Inner Temple, you became an attorney, who, dying of grief for losing a trial, the soul took refuge in a rook, that he might try his "caws" over again, and still pluck the pigeons, who, being too much for him, one day worried his soul out of his body, and, tired of occupying the cheater, lodged in the bosom of one destined to be cheated—namely, yourself. Have ye no recollection of being a sheep?

Ern. Why, I've a faint reminiscence of being cut up. But, my dear Tong-wong-fong-faw, you are the very man I have been wishing for. You are indeed learned in the only study that is interesting to me. Look—look at this cat, and tell me if—if it is a cat—if it has always been a cat—and if it will always remain a cat?

Nic. (*Contemplating the cat.*) 'Tis the same that I have seen so often playing with your old housekeeper, and by the grace of her movements, the sweetness of her mew, the curling of her tail, and the twist of her whiskers, my art teaches me that beneath this form there lies hidden one of the prettiest and cunningest of maidens!

Ern. Then my dream was true! Oh! most venerable son of the most venerable Tryconopolist, since you are so deeply studied in this doctrine, is there no earthly power that can give the spirit its former shape?

Nic. (*With mystery.*) Hush! Speak not so loud! I do not say there is not!

Ern. Then there is—and you—you know it!

Nic. Why, 'tis true. I did not wash the face of Vishnu for ten years for nothing. The trigod paid my services by communicating the grand secret. Look at this ring!—do yon see it?

Ern. I do.

Nic. It is an amulet, endued by the immortal Vishnu with the infallible power of the transmigration of souls at the pleasure of the possessor——

Ern. Indeed!

Nic. It is only necessary to rub it with the hand thus—speak three lines of extempore poetry—and pronounce the solemn name of Brama three times!

Ern. To rub it. Give it to me, my friend, and I shall care for none of the other rubs in life.

Nic. Oh, but these articles, my friend, are not common, and it requires a fortune to purchase it.

Ern. If my life—my blood—my devotion——

Nic. They are of no use upon 'Change.

Ern. Alas! I have no money.

Nic. But there are immense debts due to your late father.

Ern. Well?

Nic. Make them over to me—by this deed—and the ring is yours.

Ern. Instantly. (*Signs paper and exchanges it for the ring.*) It is mine—it is mine (*Rushing towards the bed*), and I will instantly essay its power.

Nic. Remember, you must not look upon the object at the time and in the presence of a third person. It is useless.

Ern. Then good morning, most venerable Bonze. That is the door, and I wish to be alone.

Nic. (*Aside.*) There's gratitude. How mad he is. (*Loud.*) Take care—be not too hasty in the use of this talisman, lest you repent it when it is too late. Remember, one cannot turn the world topsy-turvy in this manner without the danger of breaking one's own head. Adieu!

[*Exit.*

Ern. Good-bye. Turn the world topsy-turvy, indeed! I intend to set it to rights—to make it what it was! But I lose time. Grimalkin, I come! How peacefully she sleeps! She little dreams of the change which awaits her! But I must not look upon her. (*He draws the curtain—he takes the ring and prepares to rub.*) How my heart beats! I tremble—a kind of dread mingles with my anxiety! Come, come, Ernest, recollect the proverb, "Faint heart ne'er won fair lady." But the lines—I am no poet, and I shall be an hour or two composing them extempore. (*Thinking.*) Ganges—changes—ranges—I have them!

(*Music.—incantation.*)

Oh, thou genius of the distant Ganges,
That rolls its waters where the Indian ranges,
Genius of transforming changes,
Brama! Brama! Brama!

(*Rubs the ring—the curtains are slowly withdrawn to music, and* MINETTA *is discovered in the attitude of a cat, asleep upon the bed.*)

Ern. 'Tis done—she is a woman! The Indian has not deceived me?

Minetta. (*Awaking, rubs her eyes, and passes her hand at the back of her head.*) Where am I? (*Looking down.*) And what am I? (*Sitting up and attempting to mew.*) Bless me, I've lost my voice. (*Rising on her feet.*) Dear, how tall I am! Oh, how far I am from the ground!

(*She attempts to walk, but, with fear, stops in the centre of the stage, moves her head, and paws her face like a cat, extends her arms, and puts them one with the other, as though searching for the fur.*)

Tis very odd—all gone!

Ern. (*Watching all her movements.*) I dare no longer approach her. How charming she is, and yet she still retains the physiognomy of a cat. How shall I speak to her. Puss, puss, puss!

(*Calling her, and stretching out his hand.*)

Min. (*Starting.*) Who calls me? Ha! 'tis my master—'tis Ernest. (*Holds out her hand.*)

Ern. Ha! she knows my name. (*Taking her hand.*) How soft it is.

Min. Bless me! why, I walk like him, speak like him. A thousand thoughts, a thousand ideas crowd upon me, first here, (*putting her hand to her head,*) and then here. (*Putting her hand on her heart.*) La! what do I feel? How it beats! Bless me! what can it be? Ernest, Ernest! tell me what means this beating?

(*Putting his hand on her heart.*)

Ern. 'Tis your heart.

Min. My heart! What am I, then?

Ern. The most beautiful thing in the world—a woman! a true woman!

Min. A woman! I a woman! Oh, how delightful!

Ern. Yes, Heaven has heard my prayer, and I shall find in you all that I have ever anticipated of happiness on earth. (*Minetta looks, and turns round and round, as though looking for her tail.*) What is the matter?—What do you seek?

Min. I don't know; but I miss something—something that I think I ought to have.

Ern. (*Aside.*) Zounds! she's looking for her tail. I'll tell her one—a tale of love—but what shall I call her? Pussy was her name, but she is now more like Catalani than Pussy. (*Minetta looks about again.*) What do you want now, my love? What is the first wish of your heart?

Min. A looking-glass.

Ern. A looking-glass! Oh, come, she must be a true woman, and wants reflection quite as much as the rest of her sex.

Min. I have such a desire to know myself.

Ern. (*Bringing a looking-glass to the table.*) Here, my love, here you may see your sweet self.

Min. (*Impatiently.*) Quick, quick! (*Seizing the glass.*) How I am changed. Not so bad either. (*A little appearance of fright as she turns the glass so as to look at her back.*) No, all is right. (*Looking and appearing pleased.*) I say, Ernest, I am pretty, ain't I.

Ern. A pretty question, truly! (*Aside*) Charming!

Min. Well, so I thought—but, though, at first sight one is afraid of being deceived.

Ern. No fear of that—you are charming—and I—I have been the creator of all these beauties.

Min. You—upon my word, I'm very much obliged to ye;—but pray, sir, may I ask why you did not make me a little taller?

Ern. There now, there's the growth of ambition—just now she was no taller than that stool—and now——

Min. Oh, only a little—little bit—just so much. (*Standing tip-toe.*) Will it take you much trouble?

Ern. I can no more—my power is at an end.

Min. Hem—you are not very polite.

Ern. But you, my sweet love, must be very difficult not to be content as you are.

Min. (*Approaching him—rubbing her head against him, and extending her hand.*) I am an ungrateful puss—I mean woman.

Ern. Hark, I hear Marianne—I trust she will not know you.

Min. I should think not—and depend on my discretion.

Enter MARIANNE *with a basket.*

Mar. (*Apart.*) 'Tis done—I have sold Grimalkin to the cook for his young master—but I shall never

have courage to tell my master. (*Seeing Minetta.*) What do I see?—a woman.

(*Minetta tries to hide behind Ernest, and looks with fear at Marianne.*)

Ern. (*Aside to Minetta.*) Never fear—leave me to arrange it all. (*To Marianne.*) Well, Marianne, you are doubtless surprised—but this is the daughter of a friend of my father's—you have often heard him speak of him—the author you saw at the kit-cat sketches—she has this moment arrived from London.

(*Marianne places the breakfast on the table, and leaves the milk on the floor.*)

Mar. From London?

Ern. Yes; and being in want of an asylum, out of respect for my father, I have offered her one.

Mar. Oh! out of respect for your father.

(*During this Minetta approaches the table and sees the milk-jug.*)

Min. Cream! how delightful.

(*Eyes the milk-jug, licks her lips, and looks carefully at Ernest and Marianne.*)

Mar. Eh!—you—sir, who has renounced the whole sex, excepting me and Grimalkin——

(*Looking round and seeing Minetta dip her finger in the cream, and putting it to her mouth like a cat.*)

Lord bless me! why, what is she doing?

Min. Oh, how nice the cream is!

Ern. (*Running to her.*) What are you doing? Recollect yourself.

Min. (*Pouting.*) I ought rather to forget myself.

Mar. Ha! one of the London customs, I suppose!

(*Ernest leads Minetta to the table, and, placing her opposite, teaches her to dip her bread in the cream, and to pour it out, which she does awkwardly.*)

Ern. But, Marianne, how have you contrived to get this breakfast without money?

Mar. Why, sir, I was obliged to sell Grimalkin!

Ern. Sell Grimalkin——

Min. Sell me—how droll!

Mar. Yes. to our neighbour—the young man took a fancy to her.

Min. To a young man, too!

(*Aside, drinks out of the plate.*)

Ern. Chut! not so! (*Aside.*) She is not yet accustomed to a table——

Mar. (*Aside.*) Why, he does not seem to care about it, and I thought he would have been vexed to part from her. But where is she? Grimalkin! Grimalkin! puss! puss!

Min. (*Running up to her.*) Here I am!

Mar. (*Astonished.*) Eh, what does she mean?

Ern. There—there she is!

Mar. Oh, a cunning slut—get into my work-box.

(*Opens the box, out of which tumbles a ball of cotton and other things, Minetta sees and runs after it, playing with it and tearing and tangling it like a cat.*)

Bless me! Why, what sort of manners are these? (*Taking the things away.*) Have done, miss!

Ern. Another broil!

Min. (*Striking the floor.*) P-s-it, p-s-it; she spoils all my pleasure; she won't let me play!

Ern. Nay, nay, Marianne.

Mar. Why, look, sir, she has spoiled a twopenny ball of worsted and a pair of mittens!

(*Minetta approaches the bird cage, looks for a moment, exclaims "Bless me, what pretty birds," springs at the cage and knocks it down.*)

Oh, mercy! there's my canary bird.

Min. What an annoying old woman; there's no amusing oneself.

Mar. Amusing, indeed, to kill my canaries; a little chit of fifteen, without any experience.

Min. An old woman of sixty, with a great deal too much.

Mar. Was ever such impudence? I'll tell you what, sir, I won't stop another moment in the house.

Ern. Nay, nay, Marianne.

Mar. No, no, Mr. Ernest, such a young chit as this can be here for no good—I smell a rat!

Min. (*Running up*). Do you? Where, where—oh where?

Ernest. (*Pulling her back angrily.*) Hush, hush, I say.

Mar. No, not another moment will I stay, so I will pack up my alls, and be off directly.

[*Exit.*

Min. Oh, sir, I'm glad she's gone. Now I may do what I like.

Ern. Why did you touch her canaries? She likes them.

Min. Well, and so do I; I like canaries, they are such delicate food. But I say, Ernest—my dear Ernest——

(*Rubs her head against his bosom, and makes him pat his hand on her head.*)

Ern. Well?

Min. You must turn that old woman away.

Ern. Turn her away?

Min. Yes, send her about her business.

Ern. What, this good Marianne, under whose care we have both been brought up?

Min. Hum, hum! (*Appearing angry.*)

Ern. You know not what you ask!

Min. Ps-it—ps-it—ps-it!

Ern. I cannot do it.

Min. You refuse me—ps-it—ps-it!

(*Scratches his face.*)

Ern. Zounds! she has scratched me—what a traitor! My love, you have hurt me.

Min. Ps-it—I don't care; leave me alone, since ye are ungrateful for my tenderness.

Ern. Tenderness, indeed! I wish it was anywhere but at the fingers' ends. I could willingly hope you love me, but you must be aware that there are many things allowable in a cat that are not quite amiable in a woman.

Min. There, now you are angry—and how can I help it if my nature will now and then break out? But I will be more careful in the future, and conquer everything that displeases you.

Ern. (*On his knees.*) And I swear never to love any one but you—to have no will but yours!

Min. (*Listening.*) Hush!

Ern. What!

Min. Did you hear nothing?

Ern. Oh, never mind, think of the happiness of being devoted solely to each other.

Min. (*Listening.*) It is one.

Ern. And what delight will be mine, when I paint my love, my tenderness, my devotion, to hear you in reply, say——

Min. (*Advancing softly and cautiously.*) Hold your tongue—hold your tongue!

Ern. Well, where are you going?

Min. Yes, yes; I am sure there is one! Don't you hear?

Ern. One what?

(*Minetta steals to the wardrobe with soft and measured steps, and when near it, springs at it like a cat.*)

What's the matter? Will you have done?

Min. There, now; you've frightened it away, just as I should have caught it!

Ern. Remember you're a woman, and women don't run after mice.

Min. Don't they? then what do they run after?

Ern. Why—— (*Aside.*) I mustn't tell her that.

Min. There's no harm in a mouse, sure? However, if I am to be thwarted thus, I had better have remained as I was—then I went and came as I pleased, and so I will now, too! I want to go out.

Ern. No, no! stay here!

Min. I won't! P-st!

Ern. But you must, you see the door is closed.

Min. True! but the window is open—so away!

(*Jumps on the bed, and gets out of the window on the roof and disappears—Ernest runs distractedly to the window.*)

Ern. Stop, stop, for heaven's sake! Here, here! puss, puss! What shall I call her? She'll tumble over the parapet into the street—— Ah! this door leads to the leads——

[*Exit through door at the same moment that* MINETTA *re-enters.*

Min. Ha, ha, ha! Catch me if you can. He won't go very far. How he clambers away.

Enter MARIANNE.

Mar. Where is my master?

Min. Gone for a walk, to take the air.

Mar. I am come to say that either you or I quit this house.

Min. I stay!

Mar. Then I go!

Min. No, you don't! (*Whispers to her.*)

Mar. Is it possible?

Min. True, indeed; his studies have rendered him half mad. I have taken this step to cure him—not only to repair the evil which I regret he received at the hands of my father, but, I honestly confess, a little instigated by my affection for himself. I have therefore played upon the peculiarity of his sentiments, and if you will but aid me——

Mar. Command me.

Min. Hide Grimalkin—if he sees the cat our plan will be spoiled.

Mar. Directly—directly!

[*Exit.*

(*Minetta hides herself behind the curtains, as* ERNEST *enters at the window.*)

Ern. The devil take such aerial voyages! Wat Tyler himself could never have gone further over the roofs. I should have gone over all the neighbourhood, hadn't I been nearly washed away at the confluence of two tremendous gutters. But poor Grimalkin—where is she?

Min. (*Coming softly, on her knees, to his side.*) Here.

Ern. Ha! here again? You have played me a pretty trick! Poor thing—how cold she is?

Min. Yes, very cold.

(*Ernest caresses her—she purrs like a cat when pleased.*)

Ern. Ha—ha! This will teach you to run away from me again. Eh!

Min. You are not angry with poor Grimalkin, eh?

Ern. Oh, I don't know that. Pray what brought you back?

Min. Just to say good-bye before I quit you for ever.

Ern. Quit me!

Min. Yes, our characters are so different—one cannot change one's nature. Think how terrible must be the combination between a cat and a woman—and I fear it will be impossible for me to help showing some symptoms of my former state, and I feel that at the least noise—and even in the middle of the night—a cold winter's night—you might have to race after me over the roofs of our neighbours' houses.

Ern. That would certainly be amazingly uncomfortable.

Min. Besides, I now belong to another master. Marianne has sold me to your neighbour. I have seen him—have told him my whole story, and he is coming to claim me.

Ern. Claim you? Oh, nonsense! I shall soon teach him the rights of that! Who is he?

Min. A nice young man, not overburthened with sense; who will let me do as I like—keep me in a fine house, give me fine clothes!

Ern. And do you already forget all that you are to me, and my affection?

Min. Oh, no! I am quite unhappy to be so ungrateful; but it is our nature.

Ern. Perfidious——

Min. Yes, 'tis our nature.

Ern. Yes—I am at last convinced that your species is equally bad with ours.

Min. Ha! this is just what I wanted. Then, you think me no longer pretty?

Ern. No; I now know you, and all the beauty of your person cannot disguise the cat that is hidden beneath it, but love, nevertheless, you must remain.

Min. (*Looking at the window.*) Shall I——

Ern. Yes, in spite of yourself. (*Seizing her hand.*) Ah, the window shall not serve your turn this time—one walk on our neighbour's roof is enough in a morning. Marianne—Marianne!

Enter MARIANNE *with the box in which Ernest has enclosed the amulet.*

Mar. Yes, sir—here sir.

Ern. Shut the window, directly—directly, I say.

Mar. Well, I'll do it.

(*Puts down the box on table.*)

Min. And I, Marianne, forbid you——

(*Marianne stops suddenly, and remains in the same attitude.*)

Ern. Which way does the cat jump now? Why don't you do as I bid ye—answer.

Min. I forbid her to answer. I deprive her of the power of speech.

(*Marianne appears to try to speak, but cannot.*)

Ern. Dumb?

Min. Ay, and take care I do not exert the same power over yourself.

Ern. The Indian sage might well say that by thus changing the order of nature I should turn the world topsy-turvy, for it must be turned topsy-turvy when a woman's tongue is stopped! (*Enter* NICHOLAS, *who makes a sign to Minetta.* Ah, my sage Tryconopolist! come and assist me—take this creature from my sight! Let me never more hear of her!

(*Advances, but, as Minetta speaks, becomes also immovable.*)

Min. Hold, Indian! I order ye not to move or stir, nor to utter a word!

Ern. He, also?

Min. He—aye, and you, too, if ye resist. My power shall make you assume the form which you made me quit this morning.

Ern. Hey! what, mew me up into a cat? Ha! my power—well thought of! The amulet—'tis in that box! Great Brama, I have made one idiotic request—grant but my second—that of changing her to her original form, and it will redeem my folly. (*Going to the box.*) Oh, Brama, Brama, Brama!

(*Opens the box, out of which a large white cat jumps, and runs off the stage.*)

Mar. Grimalkin—puss!

Ern How—you run there; and remain here—what means this mystery?

Min. That we are two—and *too* much for you.

Mar. And that this is your cousin Minetta.

Ern. Minetta!

Mar. Yes, who has taken this trouble thus to recall you to your senses.

Min. Yes, sir; the talisman you bought—this metamorphosis—has all been projected by me.

Nic. And carried into execution by me; born on the banks of the Taunga-waungha, whose father was a Bonze of Tryconopolist, and whose mother was purifier of linen to the inhabitants of Tong Loo, and who is no other than your uncle's old domestic, Nicholas.

Ern. And you have never been a magpie or a monkey?

Nic. No more than yourself. I have only been an Indian for the purpose of rubbing these follies out of your memory.

Ern. Well, you have played the part of the Indian rubber excellently. My eyes are open to my folly, and I detest myself for it Minetta, your lessons have not been lost upon me; and if you will follow them up, by continuing them for life——

Min. But what security have I that you will not relapse?

Ern. (*Imitating her scratching him.*) Some clause in the marriage articles.

Min. Mind, a cat can never be a woman, though a woman may sometimes be a cat—so I trust there is a fortunate end of our cataline conspiracy.

FINALE.

When the hearts of you men in love go pit-a-pat,
For a woman, and think you have caught one;
We hope that those single won't meet with a cat,
And that those who are wed haven't got one!

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